black news digest

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Office of Information, Publications and Reports
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The U.S. Department of Labor operates through 10 regional offices located in major cities across the country. If you want a local angle on a news or feature story provided through this service—or have a direct news inquiry—you may contact one of the offices listed below. This listing includes the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Assistant Regional Directors for Information and the states in their regions:

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HOWARD UNIVESITY STUDENT, JOURNALIST JOINS LABOR DEPARTMENT STAFF

Week of March 4, 1974

WASHINGTON -- Lovell King II, a 20-year-old student at Howard University, has been named broadcast specialist with the Labor Department's Office of Information, Publications and Reports.

A native of Gary, Indiana, he is a third-year student at the Washington, D.C., university, where he is majoring in radio and broadcast management as well as in journalism.

One of King's primary responsibilities is to prepare a summary of news items from the Labor Department which are of particular importance to the black community. The news items cover the department's programs, policies and efforts to promote and improve the welfare of the country's labor force.

The weekly audio news service is prepared for the Mutual Radio Network, which then distributes the audio service to some 90 black-oriented and black-owned radio stations across the country.

In addition to pursuing his college education, King also serves as a stringer for radio station WJPC in Chicago, owned by Johnson Publications, and other radio stations.

Prior to joining the Labor Department, King was a free-lance reporter for radio station WHUR-FM in Washington, D.C., working up to 15 hours per week while a college student.

King is a graduate of Roosevelt High School in Gary, where he did feature writing for the school paper. The son of a minister, he is one of eight children.

Both as a summertime employee and as a college student working part-time, King has acquired experience in a number of occupational fields. He has worked as a photographer's assistant and public relations aide, as a laborer in the steel mills, as a waiter, and as a salesman selling women's footwear.

King is a member of the National Black Communications Society. He is married to the former Connie Collyear of Gary, Ind. They live in Washington, D.C.

Week of March 4, 1974

23,000 MINORITIES, DISADVANTAGED TO GET JOBS, TRAINING WITH AFL-CIO ASSISTANCE

WASHINGTON -- About 23,000 jobless persons will be provided new jobs and training under a $4.7 million contract with the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI), Secretary of Labor Peter J. Brennan announced.

Under the one-year agreement, the institute will develop 22,000 jobs for disadvantaged and jobless persons. An additional 1,000 minority youths will be prepared and placed as apprentices in the building and construction trades.

HRDI was established by the AFL-CIO in 1968 to mobilize labor movement resources in a nationwide program to help recruit, train, upgrade, and hire the jobless and underemployed through ongoing Labor Department programs.

HRDI operates 53 local offices and will shortly open its 54th in Alaska.

Under the new contract, HRDI will use $3.2 million to develop 22,000 jobs as well as:

-- Assist Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) prime sponsors, the National Alliance of Businessmen (NAB), federal agencies, and others in the promotion and development of manpower training programs;

-- Provide training and technical assistance to union representatives in cooperation with State and local manpower planning councils;

-- Help returning veterans find union jobs through local HRDI offices;

-- Develop at least 700 jobs for prisoners and ex-offenders; and

(MORE)

Washington, D.C.

# # #

-- Manage and provide service and technical assistance for 21 Apprenticeship Outreach programs subcontracted to local building trades councils.

HRDI will place more than 1,000 minority youths as apprentices through the Apprenticeship Outreach Program. Federal funding for this is about $1.5 million.

HRDI will also let subcontracts among employers with AFL-CIO collective bargaining agreements in 22 locations to prepare minority youths to pass apprentice-entrance tests in the building and construction trades.

As a byproduct, approximately 5,000 minority youths will attend classes and receive instruction in mathematics, reading, and other trade-related subjects, even though all do not qualify to take final tests.

The Apprenticeship Outreach Program prepares minority youths to pass written and oral entrance exams through a concentrated tutoring program of up to 10 weeks. Tests are given by joint apprenticeship committees representing management and labor in such trades as carpentry, bricklaying, and plumbing, as local openings occur.

Locations, number of enrollees, and estimated funding for the Outreach program are:

STATE	APPRENTICESHIP PLACEMENT GOAL	FUNDS
Alabama		
Birmingham	35	$ 66,660
Mobile	35	56,800
Illinois		
E. St. Louis	40	51,950
Rock Island	30	61,500
Indiana		
Gary	50	91,650
	40 *	
Iowa		
Des Moines	35	59,700

(More)

STATE	APPRENTICESHIP PLACEMENT GOAL	FUNDS
Kansas		
Topeka	35	$ 66,600
New Mexico		
Albuquerque	50	101,400
	60 *	
Oklahoma		
Oklahoma City	40	52,800
Tennessee		
Chattanooga	30	56,800
Knoxville	30	57,900
Memphis	30 **	
Texas		
Corpus Christi	30	52,000
Dallas	50	60,000
El Paso	60	102,900
	60 *	
Fort Worth	50	56,500
Houston	70	83,200
San Antonio	40	56,400
Utah		
Salt Lake City	30	60,900
Virginia		
Norfolk	30	58,400
Washington		
Spokane	30	63,500
Wyoming		
Casper	30	55,300

* Denotes journeyman placement

** Operated by HRDI

Under five previous contracts with $11.3 million in federal funds, HRDI developed nearly 87,000 job opportunities and placed nearly 22,000 persons in jobs, with the balance being referred to local state employment service offices. Of these placed, more than 12,600 were disadvantaged, about 5,000 were Vietnam-era veterans, and more than 1,600 were ex-offenders or prisoners on release.

# # #

LABOR DEPARTMENT FUNDS PILOT PROJECT TO SERVE DRUG-DEPENDENT EX-OFFENDERS

WASHINGTON -- Ex-offenders who are also in drug treatment programs will get manpower services, including referral to training programs and assistance in finding suitable employment, the U.S. Department of Labor reports.

Sam Harris Associates, Ltd., of Washington, D.C., was recently awarded a $392,000-contract, the first of a series in the pilot program to serve this special target group.

A total of 300 ex-offenders from Baltimore and another yet-to-be named city will be served during the 18-month contract.

In Baltimore, the program will serve those individuals who are receiving treatment under the Mayor's Office of Drug Abuse Control.

The pilot project will provide manpower services tailored to meet the specific needs and potential of this particular group.

In addition to ex-offenders with a dependency on drugs, the Labor Department's model programs to serve the offender population will also focus on juvenile delinquents, Hispanos, the older ex-offender (30 years and older) and those incarcerated for three or more years, females, and heads of households whose families are or have been on welfare.

The Labor Department has earmarked $5 million to support model programs serving these special target groups.

Data from the models will be used to determine at what point--from the time of arrest to release from prison--a particular offender group can best be given manpower services to rehabilitate and improve the individual's employability.

Data will also be used to identify what particular service or mix of manpower and other services are needed by the special target groups.

# # #

JOB SAFETY RULES FOR FARM EQUIPMENT PROPOSED BY LABOR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON--Job safety rules that would require guarding of farm field equipment, farmstead equipment and cotton gins to protect agricultural employees, have been proposed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The proposed standards, which would apply to farm employers with one or more employees (excluding immediate members of the family), would require that:

-- Power take-off drives on all tractors and equipment be guarded no later than April 1975.

-- All other mechanical power transmission components be guarded on all equipment manufactured on or after Jan. 1, 1975, and on all equipment, regardless of manufacture date, by Jan. 1, 1976.

-- Operators be instructed in safe operation and servicing of all equipment with which they are involved.

-- Electrical equipment be designed so it cannot be started from a remote location while another person is servicing or adjusting it.

-- Guards be kept in place while equipment is operating.

-- All cotton gins be guarded by April 1, 1975.

The proposals would not apply to farm shop equipment or hand or portable power tools. The Labor Department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced this will be considered later.

According to National Safety Council data, 20 percent of all farm employee injuries involve farm machinery.

OSHA's Standards Advisory Committee on Agriculture held five public meetings to study the problem and the proposed rules are largely the result of recommendations developed from those meetings.

Public comments or requests for a hearing on the proposal should be submitted by March 8 to the OSHA Office of Standards, Room 203-MNKA, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20210.

The proposals appeared in the Federal Register Feb. 8.

# # #

REAL SPENDABLE EARNINGS
DOWN BY 2% IN JANUARY

WASHINGTON -- Real earnings for full-time and part-time workers on production or other nonsupervisory jobs in the private nonfarm sector of the economy declined by at least 2 percent in January.

The figures were released by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

They showed:

-- Real gross earnings decreased 2.1 percent.

-- Real spendable earnings were down 2 percent.

Real earnings -- or earnings in constant dollars -- are calculated by adjusting earnings in current dollars for changes in the Consumer Price Index.

Real spendable earnings are real weekly pay after deductions for Social Security and federal income taxes. The figures are seasonally adjusted.

The 2.1 percent decline in real gross average weekly earnings was the result of a 1 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index and a 1.1 percent drop in average weekly hours.

Over the year, real gross average weekly earnings were down 3.3 percent. A rise of 6.6 percent in average hourly earnings was more than offset by a 9.4 percent increase in consumer prices and a 0.8 percent decrease in average weekly hours.

Before adjustment for the increase in the Consumer Price Index and for seasonal change, real gross average weekly earnings were $145.93 in January, compared with $137.98 a year earlier.

(MORE)

Real spendable earnings for a worker who was earning the average weekly pay and was taxed at rates applicable to a married worker with three dependents fell 2.0 percent from December, seasonally adjusted, due to the drop in average weekly hours and the increase in the Consumer Price Index.

Over the year, real spendable earnings were down 4.0 percent owing to a 3.3 percent decline in real weekly earnings and a 0.7 percent increase in the effect of taxes. This was the largest percent decline over the year since the monthly real spendable earnings series began in 1964.

The Hourly Earnings Index in dollars of constant purchasing power was 108.5 in January, seasonally adjusted, 0.7 percent lower than in December and 2.5 percent below a year ago. The index excludes the effects of overtime in manufacturing and of interindustry shifts, such as the shift of workers between high-wage and low-wage industries.

# # #

THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX--JANUARY 1974

WASHINGTON -- The Consumer Price Index rose 0.9 percent in January to 139.7 (1967=100), the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.

Higher prices for food and energy items accounted for about four-fifths of the increase in the January index, with each component contributing about equally.

The effect of the increases was moderated by price declines for apparel and used cars. The January CPI was 9.4 percent higher than a year ago.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the CPI increased 1.0 percent in January. The increase was 0.5 percent in December and 0.8 percent in November. The food index rose 1.6 percent in January, compared with 0.3 percent in December and 1.4 percent in November.

The increase in the nonfood commodities index of 1.3 percent was almost twice as much as the increases in each of the two preceding months. The services index rose 0.7 percent in January, compared with 0.6 percent in November and in December.

The index for food purchased in grocery stores--which usually is unchanged in January--increased 1.8 percent, twice the increases in both November and December. Meat and poultry prices, which declined in each of the last three months of 1973, increased in January, and prices of most other foods continued to rise.

Increases in prices of dairy products and cereal and bakery products, however, were not so large as those recorded during most of 1973. Prices of processed fruits and vegetables continued to move up

(MORE)

rapidly; fresh fruits rose more than they usually do in January, and fresh vegetables increased seasonally.

The index for food away from home -- restaurant meals and snacks -- rose 0.6 percent in January, about the same as in December, and noticeably less than the increases last fall.

The nonfood commodities index rose 0.6 percent; it usually declines by this amount in January.

Prices of fuel oil and gasoline continued to rise sharply. Over the year, the fuel oil and coal index and the gasoline and motor oil index increased 61.2 percent and 25.1 percent, respectively.

Prices also increased in January for other nonfood commodities such as newspapers, housekeeping supplies and household durables.

The new car index rose more than it usually does in January, reflecting the mid-December increases in manufacturers' prices. The effect of these price increases was partly offset by lower prices for used cars and seasonal declines in apparel prices.

The services index rose 0.7 percent in January. Higher charges for gas and electricity accounted for almost a fourth of the rise. In addition, charges for other household services such as home maintenance and repairs, housekeeping services, property taxes and mortgage interest costs also rose.

The index for medical care services rose more rapidly than in recent months led by increases in dentists' fees and charges for semi-private hospital rooms. In the transportation services category, charges for auto repairs continued to rise, and auto registration fees increased. Local transit fares declined.

# # #

RETAIL GASOLINE PRICES--JANUARY 1974

WASHINGTON--Average prices of regular and premium gasoline, collected as part of the Consumer Price Index, rose 6.2 percent from December to January, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reports.

In January, the U.S. average price for regular grade gasoline rose 6.3 percent to 46.5 cents per gallon and the average price for premium gasoline rose 5.8 percent to 50.1 cents per gallon.

In the 3-month period from October--when the Bureau started to publish average gasoline prices--to January, prices of regular gasoline rose 15.4 percent and premium gasoline 13.9 percent.

In January, prices of regular gasoline increased more than the U.S. average in nine of the 23 metropolitan areas for which individual gasoline prices and indexes are published.

Increases for both regular and premium gasoline were the smallest in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the largest in Kansas City, Missouri.

# # #

World of Work

Vets Eligible For Jobless Pay

By PETER J. BRENNAN
Secretary of Labor

QUESTION: I am going to be discharged from the military service in about a month and I'm worried about finding a job. Until I can find some work, am I eligible for unemployment compensation after I leave the service?

ANSWER: You are entitled to receive unemployment compensation after you leave the military assuming you have been on active duty for at least 90 days prior to your discharge. After you are discharged, go to your nearest unemployment compensation office to file a claim and they will direct you to the nearest state employment service office where you will register for work. You will receive unemployment compensation until you are placed in a suitable job. When you go to the unemployment compensation office, be sure to take your separation form DD-214 and your Social Security card. Benefit rights are determined under the law of the state where you file your claim after separation from the service.

* * * *

QUESTION: I believe I am covered by a private pension plan at the company where I work. How can I find out the terms of such coverage?

ANSWER: If your company administers a pension plan, it must by law make a description of the provisions of the plan available to you in simple, non-technical layman's language. The Labor Department has published a booklet, "Know Your Pension Plan," which could be of assistance to you. It can be obtained free by writing: Office of Labor-Management and Welfare-Pension Reports, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, D.C. 20216.

* * * *

QUESTION: I'm working as a waiter in a restaurant and I'm allowed one free meal a day at work. The restaurant owner says that because he gives me this meal it entitles him to pay me less than the minimum wage. Is this the law?

ANSWER: Yes, it is. Under the Federal minimum wage law, an employer can deduct from the minimum rate the "reasonable cost or fair value" of meals, lodging or any other facilities he furnishes primarily for the benefit of his employees. But he cannot deduct the cost of those facilities furnished primarily for his own benefit, such as uniforms he requires employees to wear. If you have questions concerning the federal minimum wage law, contact the Wage and Hour Division Office, listed under U.S. Department of Labor, in your telephone directory.

* * * *

Editor's note: If you have a question regarding job training and placement, labor-management relations, job health and safety, equal employment opportunity, wages and hours, employment and unemployment, prices and earnings and other matters involving the U.S. Department of Labor, send it to:

Peter J. Brennan
Secretary of Labor
"World of Work"
U.S. Department of Labor
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Consumer

Warning! Use Tender Loving Care

By Virginia Knauer
Special Assistant to the President
and Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
Department of Health, Education and Welfare

Consumers everywhere are responding with enthusiasm to the task of saving energy. Most problems caused by fuel shortages are being handled sensibly.

But some dangers have cropped up. Here and there, accidents are being reported. You may have seen stories in this newspaper about someone swallowing gasoline or being burned after knocking over a room heater. I hope not.

For safety's sake—for you, your family and friends—take special care in dealing with:

- Siphoning of gas,
- Using room heaters.

SIPHONING: If you run out of gas, never use your mouth to siphon gas from one car's tank to another.

According to Food and Drug Administration's Poison Control Program, you may accidentally swallow gas, causing nausea, vomiting and burning sensations in your stomach. Far worse, if you should suck gas into your lungs, you may experience lung damage that could result in hospitalization—possibly death.

Instead of taking those risks, buy a mechanical siphon or a small gas pump. You will find these in most auto supply and marine supply stores. Keep one on hand for a time when you're out of gas and stations are closed.

ROOM HEATERS: Consumer Product Safety Commission is warning consumers to take extreme care in using oil, gas, kerosene, coal, charcoal, wood and electric heaters.

Protect your family by following these guidelines:

- Never try to heat with your kitchen oven or with unvented charcoal grills or ovens. You'll be risking carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Have an expert serviceman check the safety of all room heaters.
- Keep all heaters away from furniture, drapes and people—especially children.
- Fill kerosene heaters carefully; spills could catch fire.
- Never fill a heater's reservoir to the brim with cold oil. As the oil warms, it expands and spills over the reservoir's edge, creating a fire hazard.
- Never use oil in a kerosene heater or kerosene in an oil heater.
- Never use electric heaters near water. Use only electric heaters that have thermostatic controls and that cut off automatically if tipped over. If an extension cord is needed, use only a special heavy-duty cord. If a heater has high wattage, have room wiring checked by an electrician.
- Have coal- and wood-burning heaters installed and inspected by professional servicemen. Protect floors with metal sheeting under heaters.

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• Never try to heat with your kitchen oven or with un-

with metal sheeting. Start heaters.